

## What is a Port of Entry?

When you arrive in Canada, you will arrive at a Port of Entry. A Port of Entry (POE) is a place which is selected as an entry point into Canada by the Government of Canada. Usually the Port of Entry that you come through will be the first airport or land crossing that you stop at in Canada. For example, if your last stop is Winnipeg but you first arrive in Vancouver, your Port of Entry is Vancouver International Airport. At a Port of Entry, every person is subject to 'examination,' which means that you will be asked to present identification documents, and may be asked to answer questions and provide personal information to determine whether you are allowed to enter Canada. The examination will usually be done by a Border Services Officer (BSO) who is an employee of the Government of Canada's Canada Border Services Agency. Likely, you will also receive a stamp in your passport. If you do not receive a stamp in your passport, you may ask the BSO to put a stamp in your passport before you leave the POE.

## Prepare to enter Canada

You can prepare for your arrival in Canada by making sure that you:

- obtain all of the recommended supporting documents and carry them with you when travelling:
  - Valid Passport;
  - Letter of Introduction from the Visa Office that you received when your Study Permit was approved OR Study Permit (if required);
  - Valid Temporary Resident Visa (if required);
  - Valid Electronic Travel Authorization (if required);
  - Proof that you have enough money to support yourself during your stay in Canada;
  - Proof of tuition deposit (if that was a requirement to obtain your study permit approval);
  - Proof of Acceptance or Enrolment; and
  - Any other documents recommended by the Visa Office or by an IIRSS immigration advisor.
- compile a list of the personal items that you are bringing with you and an estimate of their value (provide 2 copies);
- read the Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA) information for visitors to Canada: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/ivc-rnc-eng.html>;
- have an outgoing flight booked to Winnipeg (i.e: it is not recommended to arrive at the POE without a flight booked to go to Winnipeg, even if you plan to stay in another Canadian city to visit for a short period of time before you start your studies); and
- prepare to answer questions about your plans and intentions in Canada.

## Am I guaranteed entry into Canada?

As an international student, you are not guaranteed entry into Canada, regardless of whether you are a new or returning student. Your eligibility to enter Canada is assessed by a Border Services Officer each time that you attempt to enter Canada. To be eligible to enter Canada you must demonstrate that you have the required immigration documents for entry, are in good health, have enough funds to support yourself while in Canada, will leave Canada voluntarily by the end of the period authorized for your stay (i.e.: Expiry date of Study Permit, Visitor Record or Visitor Stamp), and are not inadmissible.<sup>1</sup> The Border Services Officer will also assess if you are a genuine student who meets the requirements to pursue studies in Canada. To assess your intentions in Canada, the BSO may ask about your intended studies, previous studies, and ask to see your Letter of Acceptance and/or Enrolment.

## Bringing Items into Canada (New Students)

As a visitor or temporary resident to Canada, you can bring personal items with you for your own use such as: personal computers, clothing, camera, vehicle, etc. When you are entering Canada by plane, you will be asked to complete a CBSA Declaration Card to state what you are bringing into Canada. You may also be asked to tell the Border Services Officer at the Port of Entry what you are bringing into Canada, declare that anything that you are bringing with you will be used by you and promise that you will take your belongings with you when you leave Canada. It is recommended that you prepare a list of all items that you are bringing into Canada and print two copies. This list should include the approximate value of each item as well as the make/model/serial number (if applicable). Carry this list with you when entering Canada so that you can provide it to the Border Services Officer at the Port of Entry.

You may not be able to bring into Canada goods which:

- will be used by another resident of Canada;
- will be used on behalf of a business based in Canada;
- will be given as a gift to a Canadian resident;
- disposed of or left behind in Canada; or
- are prohibited or restricted.<sup>2</sup>

## What to Expect at a POE (New Students Arriving for the First Time)<sup>3</sup>

1. Pre-arrival: When arriving by airplane, you will be asked to complete a CBSA Declaration Card prior to meeting with a Border Services Officer at the POE. Usually, you will receive this card on the airplane or you can pick up a card when arriving at the Port of Entry. It is a good idea to bring a pen with you so that you can complete the CBSA Declaration Card while on the airplane. If you are arriving by land, you are not usually required to complete a CBSA Declaration Card.
2. First CBSA Examination: Present your Passport, Letter of Introduction (if applicable), and CBSA Declaration Card to the Border Services Officer (BSO) at the POE. The BSO will ask you some questions about why you are coming to Canada and who you are. The officer may also ask you questions about what items you are bringing with you into Canada. Answer all of the questions that you are asked calmly and truthfully. You can receive service in English or French. If you have trouble understanding what is being asked, you may ask for an interpreter.
  - The Border Services Officer may ask to view your Letter of Acceptance, proof of funds and/or proof of tuition deposit. You may also be asked to present a list of the goods that you are bringing into Canada. For more information on the documents that you are recommended to carry when entering Canada, please see Page 1 of this document.
3. Baggage & Secondary Inspection: In most cases, after the first examination, you can pick up your baggage. After getting your bags, you will go to the next CBSA checkpoint where you will show your CBSA Declaration card. At this point, if you need to be issued a Study Permit or the officer has further questions, you will be asked to go to another area/room for 'Secondary Services and Inspection'.
  - At Secondary Inspection, you will be asked more questions. In some cases, your luggage may be examined or searched. You may be asked to present your Passport, Letter of Introduction, Letter of Acceptance, Proof of Funds, and/or List of Goods.
  - If the officer believes that you meet the requirements for holding a Study Permit<sup>4</sup> and are not inadmissible, you will be issued a Study Permit and allowed to enter Canada. If you are studying less than 6 months and/or are not required to hold a Study Permit, you will be allowed to enter Canada as a Temporary Resident as long as you convince the officer that you meet the requirements for entering Canada as a visitor.<sup>5</sup>
4. Exit the CBSA area: After completing all examinations you may board your connecting flight or leave the POE.

NOTE: The examination at the Port of Entry can take a long period of time. Expect to spend 1-3 hours at the Port of Entry for examination. We recommend that you allow plenty of time between connecting flights to allow for a long examination period at the Port of Entry.

## What to Expect (Returning Students)

For more information on what to expect when arriving at the Port of Entry, please see 'What to Expect at a POE (New Students Arriving for the First Time)' above. As a returning student you may be asked to present different documents than a student arriving for the first time. For example, you may be asked a valid Study Permit, Temporary Resident Visa (if required), and current Letter of Enrolment, recent educational transcript and/or proof of funds. You should also be prepared to provide the receipts from any purchases that you have made outside of Canada during your trip. As a returning student, you must be able to prove that you have followed the conditions of holding a Study Permit (you have been enrolled in studies, are not inadmissible, you have not worked without authorization, etc.). If you have not followed the conditions of your Study Permit, you may be refused entry into Canada. In most cases, returning international students will not be required to go to 'Secondary Services and Inspection'.

## Bringing Items into Canada (Returning Students)

As a temporary resident of Canada, you may qualify for a 'personal exemption' which allows you to purchase goods outside of Canada and bring them back into Canada for your own personal use without paying Canadian duty and taxes. If you bring goods from outside of Canada which exceed your personal exemption, you may have to pay duty and taxes. For example, if you return to your home country for a month and purchase a new computer, you may have to pay Canadian duty and taxes on the computer if the cost of the computer exceeds the personal exemption allowed for residents who are absent for more than 7 days (\$800 CAN). You must always report the amount you are claiming for your personal exemption in Canadian dollars. The personal exemption for which you are eligible depends on how long you have been absent from Canada.

### Personal Exemptions<sup>6</sup>

24 hours or more: Claim up to \$200 CAN worth of goods without paying any duty.

48 hours or more: Claim up to \$800 CAN worth of goods without paying any duty.

7 days or more: Claim up to \$800 CAN worth of goods without paying duty.

When you are entering Canada by plane, you will be asked to complete a CBSA Declaration Card to state what you are bringing into Canada and the value of these goods.

You may not be able to bring into Canada goods which:

- will be used by another resident of Canada;
- will be used on behalf of a business based in Canada;
- will be given as a gift to a Canadian resident;
- disposed of or left behind in Canada; or
- are prohibited or restricted.<sup>7</sup>

If you are travelling outside of Canada with valuable items (i.e.: laptop, camera, etc.) which were purchased before your initial arrival in Canada or during your residence in Canada, it is helpful to bring a receipt or documentation which proves that the item was not purchased during your recent trip outside of Canada. This will help to avoid any confusion or being charged duty or taxes unnecessarily when re-entering Canada.

## Travelling within Canada

If you have already entered Canada with a valid Study Permit or as a temporary resident and are currently in Canada, you may travel throughout the country without going through another Port of Entry examination. If you fly to Winnipeg via the United States, however, you would be required to re-enter Canada through a Port of Entry and would be subject to examination once again. Students who are nationals of countries whose citizens require a visa to enter Canada are not required to hold a valid Temporary Resident Visa when re-entering Canada after visiting only the United States but we usually recommend that students hold a valid TRV when travelling by air in order to avoid unnecessary confusion when dealing with airport personnel.

DISCLAIMER: This document does not constitute legal advice, and should not be relied upon as a source of legal advice. It is a reference sheet designed to provide information on Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA's) and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) requirements for arriving at a Port of Entry and entering Canada and describes existing requirements under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and the regulations made under that Act in general terms. The CBSA's and IRCC's regulations, policies and procedures are subject to change and may change without notice. For the most current information, please visit IRCC's website ([www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)) or CBSA's website ([www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca)). This reference sheet was prepared by a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant in good standing with the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council and is accurate as of January, 2019.

---

<sup>1</sup> If you are 'inadmissible', it means that you are not allowed to enter Canada. There are many different reasons that someone might be inadmissible. For example, if someone has had a criminal conviction, lied on an immigration application, or has a serious medical condition, that person could be inadmissible and not eligible to enter Canada. To find out more about inadmissibility, please see this information page: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/inadmissibility/index.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> The import of alcohol and tobacco is subject to specific regulations. For more information, please see: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/ivc-rnc-eng.html>. For more information on goods which are prohibited or which have restrictions, please visit the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) website at: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/rpg-mrp-eng.html>.

<sup>3</sup> US Nationals, US Citizens, residents of Greenland/St.Pierre/Miquelon and people who have been lawfully admitted to the US for permanent residence are eligible to apply for a Study Permit at a Port of Entry. For more information on what to expect if you are applying for a Study Permit at a POE, please see IIRSS's information sheet, *Applying for a Study Permit at a Port of Entry*.

<sup>4</sup> To meet the requirements for holding a Study Permit you must demonstrate to the officer that you are a genuine student and convince them that you will voluntarily leave Canada by the end of the period authorized for your stay. Also, you must show that you have been accepted by a Designated Learning Institution (DLI) in Canada (UWinnipeg is a DLI), have sufficient funds available to pay for your tuition/living expenses, meet security requirements, are in good health, and are not inadmissible for any other reason. If you do not satisfy the officer that you meet these requirements, you may be denied entry into Canada or you may be allowed entry as a temporary resident without the right to study.

<sup>5</sup> To meet the requirements for entering Canada you must demonstrate to the officer that you will voluntarily leave Canada by the end of the period authorized for your stay. Also, you must show that you have sufficient funds available to pay for your tuition/living expenses in Canada, meet security requirements, are in good health, and are not inadmissible for any other reason. If you do not satisfy the officer that you meet these requirements, you may be denied entry into Canada. For more information, please see IIRSS's information sheet, *Immigration Information for Visiting & Exchange Students* or the *Applying for a Study Permit & Temporary Resident Visa (Outside of Canada)* information sheet available online at: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/student/intl/information-for-all-students/visas-study-permits.html>. For more information about secondary inspection, please see the CBSA's website: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/pub/bsf5146-eng.html>

<sup>6</sup> Please note that there are additional restrictions on bringing alcohol or tobacco products into Canada. Restrictions also exist regarding currency and monetary instruments. For more information, please visit the CBSA website: <http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/travel-voyage/pdt-pdt-eng.html>.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on goods which are prohibited or which have restrictions, please visit the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) website at: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/rpg-mrp-eng.html>.